

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MAY 87

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULL NAME: John S. Giarrizzo Jr.

PRESENT POSITION Assistant Professor of
Art, Northwest Community College, Powell, WY

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 8/23/55
Cleveland, OH

CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA: Painting, Drawing

ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.):

1969-73 Gilmour Academy
1968-76 Summer Sessions, Cleveland Institute of Art
1973-77 Kenyon College, B.A., Fine Arts(cum laude, distinction)
1979-81 University of Colorado, M.F.A., Drawing and Painting

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

1986-88 2nd Wyoming Biennial Exhibition, Wyoming Arts Council
1987 Wyoming Fellowship Recipients Traveling Exhibit
1985 "At Home on the Range" 2 Views of the West-Colburn Gallery, Kenyon College
1983 "Small Works National '83", Zaner Gallery, Rochester, New York

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

University of Wyoming Art Museum, Laramie, Wyoming
Whitney Gallery of Western Art, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming
Wyoming State Museum, Cheyenne, Wyoming

AWARDS:

1987 Visual Artists Fellowship Award, Wyoming Arts Council
1984 1st Place Purchase Award, Professional Painting, Wyoming State Fair
1983 Juror's Award(Patterson Sims) and Special Recognition, Small Works National
'83, Zaner Gallery, Rochester, N.Y.

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

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GUARDIANS-

In the summer of 1985 I traveled to Italy to study the works of the old masters. Once there I became intrigued by the interrelationship and contrast which exists between the contemporary lifestyles amidst the omnipresent monuments and myths of the past ages. Mopeds scream, tourists stare blindly, businessmen argue, children play, the older women gossip in groups, and the old men sit smoking in resignation on the benches surrounded by figures of saints and gods that simultaneously scorn and protect with silent gestures.

I had planned to use the small village of Vagliagli, Siena as a base camp from which I would travel throughout the region. Once in Vagliagli, however, I found myself immersed in the life of the village. Embraced by the people and the characters of the village my time was soon divided between viewing the masterpieces of the Renaissance in Rome, Florence and Siena and filling a sketch book with studies from life in the village.

These two elements - the world of the old masters and the life of the modern village emerged as a point of departure for a series of images when I returned to my home in Powell, Wyoming. Juxtaposing the portraits of the villagers before passages from the paintings of Caravaggio exposed a narrative pregnant with implications revealed as a result of the process of composing a canvas with figures.

In the final analysis each painting is but a study, an attempt to address certain formal relationships-borrowing from various artistic traditions, while the series as a whole unfolds as an exploration of family and cultural traditions.

I am never quite sure at the onset of an idea where it will lead me until the process of painting takes over. Often one image will suggest another potential image which in turn provokes yet another. The result is a series; a body of related images exploring a common theme. The series, entitled Guardians began in January 1986 and currently consists of nine oil paintings{ #10 is in process} and numerous drawings and watercolors. I feel that the life of this series has just begun { I am also recognizing the potential for expanding this concept to explore similar themes involving characters of the contemporary and mythical West }.